

BEHAVIOURAL COMPETENCIES

for Canada's Substance
Use Workforce v. 2

**Interview Tool for
Administrative Support**



Canadian Centre
on Substance Use
and Addiction

Evidence. Engagement. Impact.



INTERVIEW TOOL FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT


This document provides suggested interview questions for the **Administrative Support** job cluster and the relevant competency profile. The competency profiles and proficiency levels are examples only and may be tailored or adapted to specific organizational contexts and job descriptions. Review the *Guide to Behavioural Competency-based Interviewing* to supplement the tools included in this resource.

This tool provides a selection of sample interview questions focusing on behaviour for the Behavioural Competencies and proficiency levels relevant to the **Administrative Support** competency profile. It also includes the procedures for conducting the interview and evaluating candidate responses.

While this tool is a useful template for your interview process, it might not accurately represent the competencies required for the position for which you are interviewing. Before using it, review the suggested competency profile to determine if it is relevant. If not relevant, review the competencies to determine which competencies or proficiency levels you should change to give a more accurate representation. A brief overview of the steps involved in identifying the relevant Behavioural Competencies for a profile has been provided in the *Guide to Behavioural Competency-based Interviewing*.

A job competency profile includes only the critical competencies required for the job, not those that are “nice to have”—that is, not essential to performing the job successfully.

Preferably, each profile should have no more than 12 competencies.



After confirming the competencies and proficiency levels of the relevant competency profile, you must determine which competencies you will assess in the interview and which questions you will ask. Sample questions have been provided for the relevant proficiency level for the suggested profile. A generic interview bank has been provided in the *Generic Questions for the Behavioural Competencies* to assist you in selecting and adapting alternate questions if a different competency profile is used.

Avoid assessing all competencies by interview. It would take far too much time and some competencies are better assessed through other methods, such as reference checks, knowledge tests or simulations. For a one-hour interview, five to seven questions are a reasonable number to ask.

To determine which questions to ask, consider the relative importance of a competency to the position. Also, review competencies for overlap to determine if asking a question on one competency will provide information on another competency that can then be excluded.

You might choose to assess the same competency using more than one method if it is important for the position. For example, if Interpersonal Rapport is more important than other competencies, you may wish to assess it both in the interview and through a reference check. Alternatively, you could ask two questions on this competency instead of one in the interview.

Questions can be used for reference checking by adapting the text to ask about the candidate in the third person, rather than in the second person. For example:

- **Interview Question:** “Please provide an example of a time when you coordinated a large project” (*second person*)
- **Reference Question:** “Please provide an example of a time when Mark coordinated a large project” (*third person*)

Ensure that all performance evaluations are conducted in accordance with existing organizational policies and procedures.

Interviewing Tool for Positions Related to Administrative Support

Position Title: _____

Candidate Name: _____

Interviewer's Name:	Interviewer's Title:
Date of Interview:	Location of Interview:

Preparation Checklist

- Review résumé and candidate file information, paying particular attention to jobs/experiences and education/training most related to the target position.
- Review competencies required for the target position.
- Determine which competencies to focus on in the interview.

Suggested Competency Profile

Job Cluster	Example Job Titles
Administrative Support	Administrative Assistant, Administrator, Regional Administrator, Clinic Technician

Competency Required	Proficiency Levels
Adaptability and Flexibility	1
Analytical Thinking and Decision Making	1
Continuous Learning	2
Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice	1
Effective Communication	2
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism	1
Interpersonal Rapport	2
Person-directed Care	1
Planning and Organizing	2
Self-care	2
Self-management	2
Teamwork and Cooperation	2

Conducting the Interview

1. Greet the candidate and introduce yourself, giving your name and position within the organization.
2. Confirm the job for which the candidate is being considered.
3. Explain the purpose of the interview: to gather specific information about the candidate's past experiences and accomplishments, particularly in the past two to three years; and to help the organization make a fair and informed decision on the most qualified candidate for the job.
4. Describe the interview plan:

The questions in the interview guide are designed to obtain information about the candidate's experience and accomplishments (do not have to be work-related) that relate to the competencies that are important for success in the job to be filled.

For each question, you must obtain one or more specific examples of the candidate's experience or accomplishments, ensuring that the candidate describes:

- The **Situation** or circumstances related to the example;
 - The **Actions** taken by the candidate to address the situation, along with the rationale for the action taken; and
 - The **Results** or outcome of the candidate's actions.
5. Ask follow-up questions as necessary to clarify or obtain additional information. Follow-up questions are provided below the main question.
 6. Take notes on the candidate's answers during the interview to have an accurate record of information about the candidate's experience and accomplishments to evaluate later.
 7. Provide an opportunity at the end of the interview for the candidate to ask questions.
 8. Clarify the next steps in the selection process.



Questions for Applicable Competencies at the Appropriate Level of Proficiency

The next several pages contain interview questions, one per page, with follow-up questions and space for you, the interviewer, to jot down notes. The follow-up questions are especially helpful because you can encourage the candidate to elaborate on their response to the initial question.



Question 2: Analytical Thinking and Decision Making

Definition: Gather, synthesize and evaluate information and evidence to determine possible alternatives and outcomes and make well-informed, timely decisions. Includes critical thinking and reasoning skills.

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Describe a situation where you were able to identify a certain factor that was contributing to a problem.

- Describe the problem.
- What was the key factor contributing to the problem?
- How did you identify it?
- What were you able to do to address the situation?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 3: Continuous Learning

Definition: Identify and pursue learning opportunities to enhance one's professional practice and development, and the delivery of high-quality programs and services.

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Please describe a time when you made a point of keeping current in a particular area or subject that was evolving or changing.

- What was the situation?
- In what area were you trying to keep up to date?
- Describe the methods you used to keep updated.
- To what extent did you succeed in keeping updated?
- What impact, if any, did keeping up to date have on you and others?

Notes

Situation

Action

Results

Question 4: Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice

Definition: Provide inclusive, anti-oppressive, sex- and gender-sensitive, equitable and timely services to diverse populations, as defined by culture, age, sex, gender, language, ethnicity, socio-economic status, legal status, health, ability, sexual orientation, type and mode of substance use, continued substance use, concurrent conditions, etc. Challenge oppressive structures and unequal power relations, affirm and value the worth of all individuals, families, groups and communities, and protect the dignity of all with cultural awareness, competence, sensitivity, humility and cultural safety.

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Give an example of when you adjusted your actions in working with a person or family with a different culture, belief or value system, or background from your own.

- What was the situation?
- What difference did you identify?
- Why did you need to adjust your actions and what did you do?
- How did it work out?

Notes

Situation

Action

Results



Question 5: Effective Communication

Definition: Articulate both verbally and in writing across a range of technologies in a manner that builds trust, respect, and credibility, including in-person and technology-assisted communication (e.g., video conferencing, texting, social media). Checks with the audience to ensure the message is received and mutually understood. Includes active listening skills (attending, being silent, summarizing, paraphrasing, questioning and empathizing), communicating with cultural humility and congruent non-verbal communication.

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Give me an example of a time when establishing two-way communication with an individual or group required thoughtfulness and awareness on your part.

- What was the situation?
- What made it challenging to establish effective two-way communication?
- What did you do to help ensure that communication was collaborative and respectful?
- To what extent were you successful in your communication efforts?
- What leads you to say that? (On what evidence do you base that evaluation?)

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 6: Ethical Conduct and Professionalism

Definition: Provide professional services according to the principles and values of integrity, competence, accountability, respect and trust to safeguard both self and others. It includes the development of professionalism and ethical behaviour in self and others (individuals, groups, organizations, communities).

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Tell me about a particular time when you had to ensure that your behaviour reflected your organization's ethics or values.

- What was the situation?
- Why did you feel your behaviour was important?
- How did you behave or act? Why?
- What was the reaction of others?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 7: Interpersonal Rapport

Definition: Establish and maintain relationships based on mutual respect and trust, appropriate sensitivity and transparency, empathy and compassion with people using services, colleagues, professional associates and the greater community. Encompasses skills of tact, engagement and sensitivity in all encounters with others.

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe an instance when you took into account individual characteristics of another person in order to build a relationship of trust with them.

- What was the situation?
- What individual characteristics did you consider?
- How did you use your understanding of these characteristics to build trust?
- How do you know that the relationship was successful?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 8: Person-directed Care

Definition: Support people to exercise choice in the services and supports they are seeking, and to practice self-determination in all aspects of their unique goal of well-being. For those who work with people seeking substance use services, this means supporting and empowering them to achieve their well-being goals through collaboration. The service provider acts as a bridge and navigator to supports, knowledge, information and services.

LEVEL 1 FOUNDATIONAL

Question

Describe a situation where an individual was particularly helped by your response to a request or need.

- Describe the situation, including the individual's need or request.
- What was your role in meeting the individual's request?
- What did you do to meet the individual's request?
- What effect did your response to the individual have on the work being done?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 9: Planning and Organizing

Definition: Identify and prioritize tasks, develop and implement plans, evaluate outcomes, and adjust activities to achieve objectives.

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Tell me about a time when you needed to break a large project or major activity into smaller components to get it done.

- What project or activity were you responsible for?
- How did you break it into smaller components?
- How did you go about deciding what needed to be done first, second, third, etc.?
- How did things work out?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 10: Self-care

Definition: Deliberately and continuously apply professional and personal principles of well-being. Intentionally support others to sustain optimal well-being, while maintaining physical, mental, spiritual and emotional health.

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe a time when you faced a professional or personal boundary challenge and found your own way to deal with it.

- Describe the situation. Why was it a boundary challenge?
- How did you develop your strategy to deal with the situation?
- What was the outcome? What was the impact on you and the people involved?
- How did it change your behaviour after the experience?

Notes

Situation

Action

Results

Question 11: Self-management

Definition: Appropriately manage one's emotions and strong feelings; maintain a calm and respectful composure under a broad range of challenging circumstances; and think clearly and stay focused under pressure. Encompasses self-regulation and mindfulness.

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Sometimes we need to navigate complex problems and maintain the necessary focus despite challenges. Tell me about a time when it was especially important for you to maintain focus and composure when navigating a complex situation.

- Describe the situation.
- What were your strategies for maintaining focus and composure?
- How successful were you at dealing with the complex problem or situation?
- How do you know you were successful?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Question 12: Teamwork and Cooperation

Definition: Work cooperatively and productively with others within and across organizational units to achieve common goals; demonstrate respect, cooperation, collaboration and consensus-building.

LEVEL 2 DEVELOPING

Question

Describe a time when you were working with a team and took on additional tasks to support the group's efforts.

- What was the situation?
- Why did you volunteer to take on those tasks?
- How was this received by others on the team?
- Were you able to complete these additional tasks?

Notes

Situation	Action	Results

Evaluating the Interview

All the energy and effort devoted to capturing good job-related information during the selection interview will be lost if this information is not evaluated consistently and appropriately for all candidates. This section provides guidance on how to evaluate information from the candidate gathered through the competency-based interview.

Each behavioural question is designed to elicit information relevant to a specific competency. However, human behaviour can be complex and the following situations can arise:

- A behaviourally based question is asked focusing on one competency area, but a candidate provides an example that relates to another area.
- A candidate provides examples that relate to more than one competency area.
- A candidate provides examples that relate to the required competencies during the introductory phases of the interview or during the close of the interview.

The whole interview should, therefore, be reviewed carefully for evidence of the competencies being assessed. One method for doing this is to circle each behavioural example and, if one demonstrates a competency other than the one intended by the question, note the competency demonstrated alongside the example. Then cross-reference this example in the section of the interview tool devoted to that competency.

Once all relevant information from the interview has been reviewed and correctly classified, the interviewer is in a position to understand and evaluate a candidate's past behaviour for each competency.

The next step is to assign a rating, or score, for each competency, using the rating scale below. The assigned score is based on the candidate's demonstration of the relevant behaviour indicators for the proficiency levels in the competency profile at the beginning of this tool. Refer as necessary to the *Behavioural Competencies for Canada's Substance Use Workforce* for an extended sample of appropriate behaviour indicators for each competency.

Record the score in the scoring grid on the next page. Add any particular comments needed to support the rating.

If there are multiple interviewers, each interviewer completes the scoring grid individually, without consulting the others. Upon completion of all scoring, the interviewers discuss the ratings they assigned and arrive at a consensus score for each competency.

Interview Rating Scale	
5	Well Above Standard (<i>significantly exceeds requirements</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is exceptional and reflects superior ability to perform; all aspects of the competency are demonstrated to a high degree.
4	Above Standard (<i>exceeds requirements</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is above average and reflects more than an adequate ability to perform; all or most aspects of the competency are demonstrated at an above-average level.
3	Meets Standard (<i>meets requirement</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency meets expectations and reflects an adequate ability to perform; candidate may have demonstrated minor weaknesses in some aspects of the competency, but none of major significance.
2	Below Standard (<i>falls below requirements</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is inadequate in key respects.
1	Well Below Standard (<i>falls significantly below requirements</i>) Evidence of candidate's demonstration of the competency is far from adequate in all or most respects.



Scoring Grid

Competency	Interviewer Score	Rationale/Comments	Consensus Score
Adaptability and Flexibility			
Analytical Thinking and Decision Making			
Continuous Learning			
Culturally Safe and Anti-oppressive Practice			
Effective Communication			
Ethical Conduct and Professionalism			
Interpersonal Rapport			
Planning and Organizing			
Person-directed Care			
Self-care			
Self-management			
Teamwork and Cooperation			